



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Iowa Fishing Report

Conservation and Recreation



[Top Iowa Fishing Spots for the Week of February 28](#)

This weekly fishing report is compiled from information gathered from local bait shops, angler creel surveys and county and state parks staff. For current information, contact the district fisheries office at the phone number listed at the end of each district report.

- [NORTHWEST](#)
- [NORTHEAST](#)
- [MISSISSIPPI RIVER](#)
- [SOUTHEAST](#)
- [SOUTHWEST](#)

NORTHWEST

[Arrowhead Lake](#)

There is around 13 inches of ice and 1-2 feet of snow near the boat ramp. **Bluegill** - Slow: Use a small jig tipped with a waxworm fished in 10-15 feet of water near submerged structure on the east side.

[Bacon Creek Lake](#)

The DNR stocked rainbow trout at Bacon Creek Lake on Feb. 16th.

[Black Hawk Lake](#)

The winter aeration system in Town Bay is in operation; beware of open water and thin ice in Town Bay. There is around 17 inches of ice with 1-2 feet of snow near the boat ramp of Ice House Point. There is open water in the east basin near the outlet. Check ice thickness often. **Bluegill** - Fair: Use a small jig tipped with waxworm in the rock piles out front of Gunshot Hill and off of Cottonwood Point.

[Black Hawk Pits](#)

There is around 12 inches of ice near the boat ramp. **Bluegill** - Fair: Use waxworms fished near the bottom. Some sorting is needed.

[Brushy Creek Lake](#)

Few reports last week due to weather. There is 1-2 feet of snow cover on the ice. **Bluegill** - Fair: Try waxworms fished on a small jig in 10-15 feet of water near structure in the northeast arm of the lake. **Black Crappie** – Fair: Use a minnow and spoon near submerged structure. Try also waxworms on a small jig.

[Storm Lake \(including Little Storm Lake\)](#)

Most ice is 16-20 inches with 1-2 feet of snow. Avoid ice along pressure seams and near the big island. Few reports last week due to weather. **Walleye** - Fair: Use minnows and jigging spoons in the dredge cuts on the east side of the lake in about 8-12 feet of water and the west side in 6-10 feet of water.

Most ice in the Black Hawk district is 10 to 20 inches with 1-2 feet of snow. Geese are still keeping areas open on some lakes. For more information, contact the Black Hawk District office at 712-657-2638.

[Clear Lake](#)

The lake is covered with several inches of snow. Local anglers have plowed a few paths on the lake for access. Please be courteous and don't park in the middle of the path blocking traffic. **Yellow Bass** - Fair: Start shallow with a small jig or jigging spoon tipped with several spikes or a waxworm near the Baptist camp. You have to keep moving to stay on fish. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Lots of small fish are being caught. If you're not going to use the fish you catch, please release them. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Use a jigging spoon tipped with a minnow head in the early morning. **Walleye** - Slow: Dead stick a minnow early morning or evening near the island.

[Rice Lake](#)

Ice thickness is 20 to 22 inches.

[Silver Lake \(Worth\)](#)

Ice thickness is 20 to 22 inches.

For information on the lakes and rivers in the north central area, contact the Clear Lake Fish and Wildlife office at 641-357-3517.

[East Okoboji Lake](#)

Yellow Bass - Fair: Anglers are catching yellow bass from the basin. Move often to stay on the school of active fish.

[Five Island Lake](#)

Yellow Bass - Good: Some activity reported on the lake; you need to search to find active fish. **Walleye** - Fair: Report of fish being caught during the evening hours with traditional baits.

[Lake Pahoja](#)

Bluegill - Good: Recent surveys show good numbers of angler acceptable size bluegill in the lake with large fish over 8 inches not uncommon.

Lost Island Lake

Yellow Bass - Fair: Yellow bass activity has slowed, but persistent anglers can catch good numbers of fish. **Black Crappie** - Good: Yellow bass anglers report crappie mixed in the catch.

Spirit Lake

Yellow Perch - Good: Numbers of angler acceptable size fish (8 - 9 inches) continue to be caught from the basin in 18 - 20 feet of water. Sorting is needed with numbers of small fish also in the catch.

Trumbull Lake

Yellow Perch - Good: Yellow perch continue to be harvested from the lake; anglers are very pleased with the quality of the fish caught.

Virgin Lake

Walleye - Good: Good opportunities to catch fish averaging 16 inches; best action is half hour before sunset to half hour after sunset. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Fish averaging 8 inches are common.

West Okoboji Lake

Bluegill - Good: Persistent anglers will catch good numbers of large bluegills from the lake. **Yellow Bass** - Good: Anglers report catching fish from Smiths Bay in 18 - 24 feet of water; move often to catch numbers. **Black Crappie** - Good: Report of fish activity in Little Emerson Bay. Look for good pockets of aquatic vegetation where fish will gather.

For more information throughout the week, contact the Spirit Lake Fish Hatchery at 712-336-1840.

NORTHEAST

Decorah District Streams

Ice and packed snow on roads make travel slow. Road shoulders are hard to see. Use care traveling the back country. Think spring. The [2019 trout stream stocking calendar](#) is now available. **Brown Trout** - Fair: Spin fishers using minnow imitating jigs will do well. In clear water, use a dark jig with a bright red spot. **Rainbow Trout** - Fair: Fish areas trout are seeking food and protection. Move a fly along a current break. **Brook Trout** - Fair: If you match the right insect hatch switch pattern. Midges are hatching now. Use grey or dark colors.

Lake Hendricks

About a foot of snow on 20 inches of ice. Open water around the aerator; use caution in this area. No motorized vehicles allowed here. Few anglers have been out. **Bluegill** - Slow.

Lake Meyer

Ice depth is 20 inches covered with hard crusty snow. Few anglers have been out. **Bluegill** - Slow. **Largemouth Bass** - Slow.

[Volga Lake](#)

Drifted snow covering 10 to 20 inches of ice. Few anglers have been out. **Yellow Perch** - Slow: Use a small jig tipped with a spike or waxworm. **Bluegill** - Slow.

Continued cold and active weather patterns and sluggish fish activity are slowing angling activities. For current fishing information, please call the Decorah Fish Hatchery at 563-382-8324.

[Silver Lake \(Delaware\)](#)

There has been activity on Silver Lake. Anglers are catching some largemouth bass, bluegill and northern pike. **Bluegill** - Fair: Try fishing a jig tipped with a waxworm just off of the bottom. **Northern Pike** - Fair: Anglers have had success using tip-up rigs with a live shiner for bait.

The wintry weather continues and anglers are tiring. Reports are very poor from this past week. Trout streams are in excellent condition. Call the N.E. Iowa district office at 563-927-3276 for more information.

MISSISSIPPI RIVER

[Mississippi River Pool 9](#)

River level is 8.2 feet at Lansing. Avoid ice on shoreline edges and areas of current. Fish deep cuts above the Lansing bridge or in Shore Slough. **Northern Pike** - Fair: Some northerns are being caught on tip-ups using shiners in backwater lakes and marina areas. **Bluegill** - Slow: Bluegill bite has slowed, but decent sized fish are still being caught. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Use chartreuse jigs tipped with a small minnow. **Largemouth Bass** - Fair: Try fishing with larger active minnows in the deeper backwater cuts. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Use glow jigs tipped with minnows from mid-morning to early afternoon.

[Mississippi River Pool 10](#)

River level is 16 feet at Lynxville and is stable. Heavy snow cover is insulating the ice. Avoid areas of current and shorelines. **Northern Pike** - Fair: Some northerns are being caught on tip-ups using shiners in backwater lakes and marina areas. **Bluegill** - Slow: Bluegill bite has slowed, but decent sized fish are still being caught. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Use chartreuse jigs tipped with a small minnow. **Black Crappie** - Fair: The crappie bite picked up this week. Try glow jigs tipped with minnows from mid-morning to early afternoon. **Largemouth Bass** - Fair: Try fishing with larger active minnows in the deeper backwater cuts.

[Mississippi River Pool 11](#)

River level is 8 feet at Guttenberg. Ramps are frozen over at the dam. The bite is slow, but some nice perch are biting in Zollicoffer at Mud Lake near Dubuque. Avoid the springs and creek area walking in as ice may be thin. **Northern Pike** - Fair: Some northerns are being caught on tip-ups using shiners in backwater lakes and marina areas. **Bluegill** - Slow: Bluegill bite has slowed, but decent sized fish are still being caught. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Use chartreuse jigs tipped with a small minnow. **Black**

Crappie - Fair: The crappie bite has picked up this week. Try glow jigs tipped with minnows from mid-morning to early afternoon. **Largemouth Bass** - Fair: Try fishing with larger active minnows in the deeper backwater cut..

Upper Mississippi River levels have fluctuated, causing unsafe crevices along shorelines. Heavy snow cover is insulating the ice. Ice depths are 15-18 inches with many areas having a layer of slush. Avoid ice in areas with springs and any current.

[Mississippi River Pool 12](#)

Water levels are 7.4 feet at the Dubuque Lock and Dam and 9.8 feet at the RR bridge. This is nearly identical to last week and it is expected to recede. Water clarity is good. The water temperature is 33 degrees. **Bluegill** - Good: Use small jigs with waxworms. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Some crappies are being caught on waxworms. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Yellow perch are being caught mixed in with bluegills and crappies.

[Mississippi River Pool 13](#)

Water levels are 8.7 feet at the Bellevue Lock and Dam. Water clarity is good. The water temperature is 33 degrees. The tailwater is iced in. The north ramp and parking area at Sabula is open after bridge construction. **Sauger** - No Report: Use a three way rig with minnows or a jig and minnow. **White Bass** - Fair: Small white bass are reported at Sabula and Browns lakes. **Yellow Perch** – Fair: Yellow perch fishing is expected to pick up yet this winter

[Mississippi River Pool 14](#)

Water levels are 7.5 feet at Fulton Lock and Dam, 10.9 feet at Camanche and 5.6 feet at LeClaire. Expect levels to recede. Water clarity is good. The water temperature is around 33 degrees. **Sauger** - No Report: Use a jig and minnow or three way rigs with minnows. Poor weather conditions have limited fishing activity. **Bluegill** - No Report: Decent ice is reported in places. Anglers are fishing all the usual spots, Joyces Lake Rock Creek and Cattail Slough.

[Mississippi River Pool 15](#)

The water level is 9.4 feet and is expected to drop. Water clarity is good. The water temperature is around 33 degrees. No fishing has been reported to us in Pool 15.

The tailwaters are iced in at the ramps. Ice fishing conditions are variable, but decent ice can be found in lots of areas. When weather is nice we have lots of anglers out. Water levels are dropping throughout the district. If you have any angling questions, please contact the Bellevue Fisheries Station 563-872-4976.

[Mississippi River Pool 16](#)

Tailwater stage is 9.46 feet at Lock and Dam 15 in Davenport and has been steady the

past couple days. We have received reports that the Marquette St. boat launch is iced in. We have not received any ice fishing or ice condition reports this week.

Mississippi River Pool 17

Tailwater stage at Lock and Dam 16 in Muscatine has risen to 9.46 feet and is starting to fall. Tailwater stage had risen close to 1.5 feet since the weekend. The boat launch at Muscatine is iced in. The boat launch at Big Timber is closed. We have not received any ice fishing or ice condition reports for this pool. There could be unsafe ice conditions with the high and fluctuating river levels.

Mississippi River Pool 18

Tailwater stage is 12.01 feet at Lock and Dam 17 at New Boston and is starting to fall. Tailwater stage had risen close to 2 feet since the weekend. We have not received any ice fishing or ice condition reports for this pool. The Toolsboro ramp is still closed. The high and fluctuating river levels could create unsafe ice conditions.

Mississippi River Pool 19

Tailwater stage is 8.97 feet at Lock and Dam 18. Flood stage is 10 feet. We have not received any reports if boat ramps or the main channel are open. We have not received any ice fishing or ice condition reports for this pool. The high and fluctuating river levels could create unsafe ice conditions.

River stages had risen again over the weekend, but are starting to fall. There could be some unsafe ice conditions with the high and fluctuating river levels. We have not received much for fishing reports this week. If you have questions on fishing Pools 16-19, contact the Fairport Fish Hatchery at 563-263-5062.

SOUTHEAST

Big Hollow Lake

Ice took some damage, especially around the edges from last weekend's rain. **Black Crappie** - Slow.

Lake Belva Deer

The ice took some damage, especially around the edges from last weekend's rains. **Bluegill** – Slow: Fishing slowed down after last weekend.

Lake Darling

The lake came up about 18 inches after last weekend's rain, refroze and then went back down. Ice around the edge is discolored and has air pockets under some of it. Water has cleared up some, but is still tinted. **Black Crappie** - Slow: The crappie bite slowed down greatly and the fish have scattered. You will need to be ready to move to find them.

Lost Grove Lake

Black Crappie - Fair: Anglers continue to catch some crappies out along the creek channel around the trees.

For more information on the above lake, call the Lake Darling Fisheries Office at 319-694-2430.

Diamond Lake

There is 8-12 inches of ice with the same amount of snow on top. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Fish the basin or around deeper brush for 8- to 9-inch crappies. **Bluegill** - Fair: Catch 7- to 8-inch bluegills with a jig/waxie around brush.

Hannen Lake

Black Crappie - Slow: Quite a few fish are 11+ inches. **Bluegill** - Fair: Many fish are 8+ inches.

Iowa Lake (Iowa Co.)

There is about 15 inches of ice on most of the lake. **Bluegill** – Fair. **Black Crappie** – Fair.

Kent Park Lake

The lake is currently drained for a lake restoration project.

Lake Macbride

Most of the lake has about 12 inches of ice. There is no snow cover, making it slippery. **Bluegill** - Fair: Try jigs/waxies fished over rock or brush. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Fish around stumps or trees in 10-20 feet of water. **Wiper (Hybrid Striped Bass)** - Slow: Use minnows, spoons or jigs/waxies around stumps or off rock breaks in 15-20 feet of water.

Pleasant Creek Lake

Fishing activity and catches have been reported as slow. There is about a foot of ice here.

Sand Lake

Sand Lake is in Marshalltown. You must have a trout stamp to fish for and/or possess trout. **Rainbow Trout** – Fair: Fish up to 18 inches have been reported. **Bluegill** – Fair: Most were smaller this week. **Black Crappie** – Slow.

For more information, contact the Lake Macbride Fisheries Station at 319-624-3615.

Lake Miami

Anglers are catching some bluegills and crappies. Use caution and check ice thickness often.

Lake Sugema

Ice thickness is 4-7 inches; use caution if venturing out. Most of the ice fishing in this area is occurring on the Tug Forks lakes northwest of Lake Sugema.

Lake Wapello

Use caution and check ice thickness often. Try jigs with small minnows or tipped with a waxworm.

Rathbun Reservoir

The current lake level is 906.20 msl. Normal operating elevation is 904.0 msl. Ice

thickness is variable, so use caution. The lake level has come up about 2 feet since last week; use caution getting on and off the ice. Not many anglers have been out. Lake Rathbun has zebra mussels, so make sure to properly drain, clean, and dry equipment before transporting to another water body.

[Red Haw Lake](#)

Anglers report 12 inches of ice. **Bluegill** - Fair: Try small jigs tipped with a waxworm or small minnow. Sorting is needed for larger fish.

Ice conditions in the Rathbun district are variable across the district; use caution if venturing out. The district includes Mahaska, Lucas, Wayne, Monroe, Appanoose, Wapello, Davis and Van Buren counties. Contact the Rathbun Fish Hatchery at 641-647-2406 with questions about fishing in south central Iowa.

SOUTHWEST

[Ada Hayden Heritage Park Lake](#)

Rainbow Trout - Good: Use jigging spoons tipped with waxworms. Trout tend to swim close to the shoreline, so setup over water shallower than 15 feet. You must have a trout stamp to fish for and/or possess trout.

[Big Creek Lake](#)

Black Crappie - Fair: Use live minnows or waxies on glow jigs in the afternoons and evenings. Fish brush piles deeper than 15 feet and the edges of the roadbeds and creek channel mid-lake. **Walleye** - Fair: Try live minnows still fished and minnows or minnow heads on jigging spoons in creek channel edges, humps and roadbeds throughout the lake from the Marina to just south of the west boat ramp.

[Don Williams Lake](#)

Black Crappie - Good: Crappie fishing is good in the late afternoon and evenings. Fish mid-lake near creek channel edges, stumps and sunken habitat in 10 to 20 feet of water.

[Hickory Grove Lake](#)

The lake is drawn down around 9 feet, but good fishing is still possible. **Bluegill** - Good: Catch bluegills and crappies off brush piles with waxworms and minnows.

[Lake Petocka](#)

Rainbow Trout - Good: Use small jigging spoons tipped with waxworms or still fish live minnows. You must have a trout stamp to fish for and/or possess trout.

Good ice conditions continue in Central Iowa. There is 10 to 15 inches of ice. For more information on Central Iowa lakes and rivers, call Ben Dodd at 641-891-3795 or Andy Otting at 515-204-5885.

[Big Lake \(Including Gilbert's Pond\)](#)

Big Lake was stocked with 1000 rainbow trout on Feb. 9th. **Rainbow Trout** - Good: Use

small jigs, minnows or waxworms. You must have a trout stamp to fish for and/or possess trout.

Cold Springs District Farm Ponds

Large amounts of drifted snow has made access to ponds very difficult. **Bluegill** – Slow. **Black Crappie** – Slow.

Lake Anita

Anglers report 10 inches of ice. **Bluegill** - Fair: Anglers report catching bluegill around brush piles. Fish average 8.5 inches. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Crappies are being caught in tree piles close to the creek channel. Early morning and late afternoon bite is best.

Littlefield Lake

Ice thickness is 8 to 10 inches. Find fish around cedar tree piles placed in the lake. **Bluegill** - Fair: Fishing is good for bluegill if you can get to a cedar tree pile. Sorting is needed for larger fish. **Black Crappie** - Slow: A few large black crappie are being caught in the afternoon around cedar tree piles.

Nodaway Lake

No reports this week from Nodaway Lake. Anglers were finding fish in the brush piles last week. **Bluegill** - Fair: Look for bluegills in the tree piles. Fish will average 8 inches. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Late afternoon bite is best. Fish will average 10 inches.

Orient Lake

Orient has a good crappie population. Target the tree piles out from the dam. **Black Crappie** - Good: Find 10- to 12-inch crappies in the tree piles out from the dam. **Bluegill**- Good: Use waxworms in the tree piles. Fish will average 7.5 inches.

Prairie Rose Lake

Anglers report good ice conditions. but difficult access due to snow. **Bluegill** - Slow: You may need to move around to find fish. Bluegill in Prairie Rose are quality size. **Black Crappie** - Slow: A few 10 inch crappie are being caught around the tree piles.

Viking Lake

Ice conditions have improved at Viking Lake, but very few fishing reports this week. **Black Crappie** – Slow: Target brush piles. Early morning and late afternoon bite is best.

Ice conditions remain good in the southwest district. Large amounts of drifting snow has made access difficult on some lakes and ponds. For more information, contact the Cold Springs office at 712-769-2587.

Green Valley Lake

About 12-14 inches of ice. **Black Crappie** - Good: Catch crappie up to 8.5 inches with minnows or jigs tipped with waxworms fished near cedar tree brush piles. **Bluegill** - Fair: Catch bluegill up to 8 inches using jigs tipped with waxworms fished near cedar tree brush piles.

Little River Watershed Lake

About 7-14 inches of ice. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Catch crappie up to 12 inches with minnows or jigs tipped with a waxworm fished near cedar tree brush piles.

Summit Lake

About 12 inches of ice. Be cautious around the HWY 25 bridge as there may be areas of thin ice. **Bluegill** - Fair: Catch Bluegill up to 8 inches with jigs tipped with a waxworm fished near cedar tree brush piles or near the creek channel.

Three Mile Lake

About 12-14 inches of ice. **Walleye** - Fair: Catch walleye up to 16 inches with minnows fished near the roadbed early and late in the day. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Catch crappie up to 9 inches using minnows or jigs tipped with waxworms fished near cedar tree brush piles.

Twelve Mile Creek Lake

About 12-14 inches of ice. **Black Crappie** - Good: Catch crappie up to 9.5 inches using jigs tipped with a minnow or waxworm fished near cedar tree brush piles or flooded timber near creek channels. **Bluegill** - Fair: Catch bluegill up to 8 inches with jigs tipped with a waxworm fished near cedar tree brush piles or flooded timber near creek channels.

Most Mount Ayr district lakes have variable ice conditions from 6-14 inches. Use caution and drill test holes. For more information, please call the Mount Ayr Fisheries office at 641-464-3108.